

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT LETTER TO LATIN AMERICAN HEADS OF STATE

EYES ONLY

Dear Mr. President:

While we now have evidence that the USSR offensive missiles are being removed from Cuba, we still have to work out arrangements for verification that all offensive weapons have left the island. Followup to prevent any repetition is also of the greatest importance. We are thus still engaged in solving the problems involved in the gravest threat to world peace since World War II.

The fact that we have had a measure of success thus far is due in very great measure, in my judgment, to the promptness with which the countries of the Hemisphere denounced unanimously the secret attempt of the USSR to use Cuba as a Western Hemisphere base for offensive nuclear weapons. This action, had, I am sure, a great impact on the policymaker in the Kremlin. Its effect was reinforced by the numerous prompt offers of military units or facilities for us in the quarantine.

But while the Soviet offensive capability is being removed from Cuba and negotiations on other points in my agreement with Chairman Khrushchev are proceeding, we should again turn our attention to the opportunities of peace. If we are successful in finally defeating, through an unshakeable solidarity, this major threat by the Soviet bloc against our peace and security we should

be emboldened to be even more ambitious than in the past about

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDU/MR

Sgt. Gandy

ridding

REVIEWED BY *A. J. P. Morris*

DATE *6/16/68*

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Approved by *Robert F. Kennedy*

Date *5/23/68*

ridding the Hemisphere of poverty, ignorance and disease, as well as of the international communist movement.

It is regrettable that our attention was necessarily so riveted during the week of October 22 on the expanding nuclear missile capability in Cuba that few of us were able to give the prominence which it deserved to the first annual meeting, at the Ministerial level, of IA-ECOSOC in Mexico City. The US Representative, Secretary of the Treasury Dillon, and the Coordinator of the Alliance for Progress, Mr. Teodoro Moscoso, have informed me that the sessions were characterized by an atmosphere of considerable satisfaction in our achievements during the first year of the Alliance for Progress, coupled with a frank recognition of the deficiencies which had appeared in one way or another in the performance of all the participating countries. This is the only attitude which will make it possible for our peoples to gain more benefits from the Alliance during the second year than in the first year.

Hemispheric solidarity and cooperation can be just as productive in this peaceful and constructive enterprise as in the crisis in which we are now involved. It may be less dramatic and sudden in its results, but it can be even more important and lasting in its benefits.

I am sure all of us have learned a great deal about international political forces from our struggle to preserve the peace of the

Hemisphere.



Hemisphere. There will be many future crises, I fear, on the international scene or in individual countries, before the world will be safe for freedom, but we have seen that the unity and courage of free peoples is more than a match for deception and violence.

The action of the present Cuban regime in permitting the USSR to place offensive nuclear weapons on Cuban soil has confirmed in unmistakable fashion our conclusion at Punta del Este in January that this Marxist-Leninist Government was incompatible with the Inter-American system. We must all hope the day will soon come when the Cuban people can exercise their right of self-determination by choosing freely the government under which they want to live.

I appreciated your prompt response by action to my urgent letter of October 22. I should welcome your views on this letter and on the opportunities which lie before us, as well as the dangers still to be avoided.

11/12/62-For NSC ExCom, 11/12/62, 11:00 a.m.